

A
S E R M O N

Preached in the
Parish Church of *Saint Ives*,

ON
Thursday, October 9, 1746;

Appointed a Day of
PUBLIC THANKSGIVING
to Almighty GOD, for suppressing
the late *Rebellion*:

BY
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Vicar of the said Parish,
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A

Thanksgiving Sermon,

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2 CHRON. 13. 18.

Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the LORD God of their fathers.

REHOBOAM, the son of Solomon, having rejected the counsel of the ancient sages, that had advised his father; and taking the *rash* advice of persons of his own standing, more studious of his *pleasure* than his *interest*, highly disgusted the people of *Israel*; who had applied to him, to no purpose, for a redress of their grievances. Jeroboam the son

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of *Nebat*, who had fled into *Egypt* for fear of king *Solomon*, and was returned upon the news of his death, taking advantage of the situation of publick affairs, and the general disposition of the *Israelites*, put himself at the head of the *discontented* in the kingdom, and got declared and proclaimed king of the ten tribes: and the more effectually to secure the power he had obtained, and prevent the people from returning to *Reboboam* from whom they had revolted, he taught them to reject the worship of the *true* God, which the children of *Judah* and *Benjamin* adhered to, and set up *idolatry*, or the worship and service of *false* gods of his own invention, among the ten tribes that had put themselves under his government. But this subtle contrivance of his, like many of the deep-laid schemes of great politicians, instead of answering his purpose, ruined the cause he intended to serve by it. He made the people indeed most unlike the other two tribes under *Reboboam*, in their religious notions and practices; and thus made a return of
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the ten tribes to the *religious* and *civil* government of their brethren highly unlikely : and by this means, as he thought, most effectually confirmed himself in the power he had acquired.

But, leaving out in his schemes all this while the great *Sovereign* of the *universe*, that all-powerful Being who ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth them to whomsoever he will ; who doth according to his pleasure in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth, putting down one and setting up another ; who had rent the kingdom from *Rehoboam*, as a punishment for the *idolatry* of his father *Solomon* in his latter days, and who will by no means give his honour — suffer it to be given, to another: Leaving out, I say, this sovereign *governor* of kingdoms, as well as all other things, and setting up stocks and stones in contempt and defiance of His Divine Majesty, he experienced the truth of these indisputable and unalterable MAXIMS.--“None
“ can *harden* themselves against Him, and

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“*prosper.*” “Them, who walk in *pride,*” in self-confidence, in contempt and defiance of the Divine Majesty, that God, in or by whom they live, move, and have their being, and from whose bounty alone they derive every thing they enjoy — He is abundantly *able*, and, in his own due time, *sure* withal to *abase*.

For in this chapter we find *Abijah*, the son of *Rehoboam*, warring with *Jeroboam*, and with *half* his numbers gaining a complete victory over him. There is such a strain of sound reasoning, such a deep sense of true piety in *Abijah*’s expostulation and conduct before the engagement, that it may be worth our while to turn to the account we have of it in the fourth and following verses of this chapter.

He objects to *Jeroboam* and the people under him, their rebellion against their rightful prince, and apostacy from the great God of their fathers, and the religion they had been brought up in ; and upbraids them with their gross *idolatry* in giving divine honours
to

to the work of their hands, the invention of *Jeroboam's* own brain ; and with extirpating the *priests*, together with the worship and service of the true GOD, and substituting a race of mortals in their stead, fitting and worthy the deities they were appointed to minister to. and reminds them, on the other hand, that he, and his people, had adhered religiously to the GOD of their fathers ; and duly revered His precepts, His ordinances, and His priests : and presumes of course on the presence and assistance of the LORD God of their fathers ; and warns them of the folly, and dissuades them from the rashness, of thinking to prosper, when manifestly fighting against GOD. And the event proved undeniably that his presumptions and reasonings were well grounded. For though the men of *Judah* were surrounded by the *Israelites*, and were not more than *half* their numbers ; yet by the Divine assistance, which they importuned and relied upon, they were enabled to obtain a signal and complete victory ; to destroy a *majority* of them, and put
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the *rest* to flight. "Thus the children of *Israel* were brought under at that time, and "the children of *Judah* prevailed; *because*, "they relied upon," confided or trusted in, not their own hearts or arms, not the numbers, the valour, or the conduct of their forces, but "the LORD God of their fathers;" the LORD of *hosts*; the great God of the *armies* of all flesh; whose always is the *battle*, and he giveth it to whomsoever he pleaseth: who had exerted His power in a variety of wonderful ways, in the defence and protection of their fore-fathers; and to whose favour and especial regard they had made it their constant study to recommend themselves, by being *punctual*, *steady*, and *zealous* in His worship and service.

Success is here so manifestly and entirely ascribed to the great Governor of the universe, that the passage seems quite proper for the subject of our present meditation; when we are called together most devoutly and thankfully to acknowledge the goodness of Almighty God in affording us His protection

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tection and assistance, and giving success to his Majesty's *arms*, under the conduct of his Royal Highness the Duke of *Cumberland*, a leader highly distinguished and illustrious beyond expectation, or example, for one of his years; to the defeat of the common robbers and disturbers of our Country; and to the *suppression* of a most merciless and execrable *Rebellion*, formed to rob us of our liberties, our laws, our religion; after the cruelty, the rapine, the plunder, the bloodshed, the confusion, and other dreadful calamities of a civil and intestine war had laid waste a fertile and wealthy country; and rendered a *free* and *bold* people *tame* and *abject* enough to submit to the *slavery*, the *superstition*, and *idolatry* of *France* and *Rome*. when we are reflecting upon our deliverance from the greatest and forest of temporal evils, miseries and calamities; and in a public and solemn manner ascribing our deliverance and safety to the bounty of Almighty God; and are supposed, of course, to be engaging ourselves to express our gratitude.

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titude in the best and most acceptable manner, by making it our study and endeavour to demean ourselves, for the future, as those, who are deeply conscious of having been delivered from the greatest of evils, *viz.* by devoting our lives, and all our several faculties to the true worship and service of our *almighty deliverer*; that so doing we may safely confide in the defence and protection of the great Governor of the universe, and the LORD of kings, that He who has hitherto *delivered*, saved or preserved us from so great and impending evils, and *now* doth deliver us; will not fail to *save* or *deliver* us for the *future*, and to make us finally and completely happy in his own due time.

The notions and practices of the principal fomentors and actors in the late *rebellion*, the *Papists* I mean, and those of the *Israelites* under *Jeroboam* are much alike in *many* respects. their worshiping of relicks, images, and departed christians, saints, and angels, seems as *gross idolatry*, as can well be practised: and their doctrines of purgatory,

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auricular confession, cancelling of engagements and oaths given to heretics; prayers for the dead in general, and for *rebels* and *traitors* especially, are plain proofs, that *worldly* wealth, grandeur, and power, are the *deity* they have made to themselves to serve and worship. I wish it might with a *proper* regard to *truth* be said, that *our* behaviour as nearly resembles that of the people of *Judah*: that *we* were as studious of God's *honour*, as strict observers of His *day*, as constant and zealous attenders upon His *word* and *worship*, as sensible of the necessity of His blessing in order to make any of our undertakings prosper, as careful to serve and please Him in all points, and of course as well intitled to the continuance of the divine protection and favour, as *they* were.

It is too notorious to be denied, that a spirit of infidelity, irreligion, self-confidence, licentiousness, and a contempt of all things serious and sacred, *human* laws and governors, as well as *divine*, has gone out, and prevails amongst the people of this land.

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Common

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Common swearing and cursing, the greatest insult upon, and outrage against the Majesty of heaven, is a most familiar and common practice with *most* ranks of men amongst us; especially the *lower* sort: and has, probably, been highly instrumental in making the most sacred and tremendous *name* of God a mere cypher; in banishing all regard to the Deity out of men's minds; and in introducing that *torrent* of PERJURY, that *common contempt* for the most sacred oaths, administered in courts of justice, and by persons having authority for that purpose, that has most *shamefully over-run* the nation; and renders *property, liberty, and life* itself, precarious and insecure in a high degree. Thus the difference between *Protestants* and *Papists* in this respect is no more than this, that the former acknowledge the obligation of oaths, and yet have impiety and hardness enough to do violence to them; the latter get them cancelled, and then think there is no kind of harm, and sometimes great merit, in despising them. We have good laws against this
practice

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practice of *common* swearing, that even children, and the lowest of mankind are great proficient in, and has most dreadful consequences, which want nothing at all, *but* to be *put in execution*. and it is very fit a check should be given to the *daring insolence* of those, who are proof against all restraints from religion and good breeding, by inflicting the temporal punishments, which the laws of the land have *wisely* appointed for that purpose. And I do not see how any *magistrate*, of what rank or condition soever he be, or indeed any *serious Christian* and *good subject*, can answer it to God, his country, his prince, or his *own conscience*; if he neglects or declines any measures in his power, to put a stop to this most *monstrous* and *daring* impiety.

GOD's *word*, and His *worship*, fare but little better among us, than his *name*. The sacred writings serve for little else, but to be burlesqued or cavilled at; to furnish matter for drollery and wit, for discourse or dispute, for ribaldry or profaneness; to *swear*

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upon, or to teach our children to *read* out of. Thus that book of *life*, which was graciously given to conduct us to heaven; and which we exclaim so *loudly*, and with *reason*, against the *Papists* for shutting up against their people in an *unknown* tongue, is made a *dead* letter to us; and serves to no sort of purpose, but to aggravate, or inflame our condemnation.

The *worship* of God both in *public* and *private*, seems likewise to be as much neglected and disregarded, as can reasonably be expected from a people, having a *sovereign contempt* both for the sacred *name*, and *word* of God. We find few people attending the public worship, but those that don't know well how *else* to spend their time; except such as are despised for their singularity and preciseness, and suspected of *uncommon* baseness, villany, and hypocrisy, for pretending a regard for *religion*; which has long been the subject of ridicule to *many*, and which *most* are grown such entire strangers to, that they think none but *fools* or *knaves* will concern themselves *much* about it.

On

On *one* day indeed in *seven*, or perhaps more strictly speaking, in *one* part of each *seventh* day, when custom, it may be, more than the laws either of God or man, has taught us to meet together, the places of *public* worship are *more* frequented: but the number of the *absenters* is even *then* commonly very large; and the deportment of the parties *present* is often such, as to shew they are altogether above regarding, or being made at all the better, the wiser, or the happier for what passes there. And from what is done in *public* we may form a shrewd conjecture of what passes in *private*. for if a regard to the grave and sober part of an audience cannot prevail for a decency of behaviour, when men have taken the pains to go a little *out* of their way, to avoid the character of profligate and infamous; what shall be thought able and likely to do this, when removed from the notice of *all living*, and conscious of no witness, but that of a man's own breast?

The

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The *distinction* indeed of the *Lord's day* from the *rest* is a little kept up; but the *religion* of it seems to be partly dropt and gone. That early rising in the morning; that giving themselves to reading, meditation and prayer in *private*, in order to prepare and fit people to join worthily in the *public* offices of religion; that instructing of children and servants in the *knowledge* of piety and vertue, and encouraging them to the *practice* of it; that recollection and meditation after the public worship is ended; that examination of our lives and practices by any heavenly light, that may have been imparted to us; that religious and pious conversation; those resolutions of endeavouring after a better temper and behaviour; that reading to and praying with one's family, which used to fill up the spaces of the *Lord's day*, not spent in public worship, are almost entirely disused and laid aside. And the chief use of it seems to be to give an opportunity to what are called the *better* sort of appearing in public to advantage; and

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and of affording leisure to such as are constantly employed on other days, to sleep, to saunter away, to trifle in ; or to abuse in riot and excess.

The exercise of worldly business and vocations in *public* on *Sundays* is not yet common, nor altogether free from blame and disrepute ; though great part of the day is by many spent in secular engagements ; in conversing or writing about business or worldly affairs ; in stating or making up of accounts : and even the sober and grave are getting into a fashion to waste great part of the day in hunting after *news* ; disputing vehemently about things of no kind of consequence ; settling the affairs of their *own*, and *foreign nations*, and of *many*, perhaps *most*, of their *neighbours* ; whilst their *own* are suffered to shift for themselves, and remain in the *utmost disorder and confusion*.

The exercise of *particular* trades on a Sunday, though directly contrary to the laws of the land, and not *as yet*, to be done without *some little* shame, is too frequent in
many

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many places, and particularly in *this*. The putting a stop to practices of this sort by all *reasonable** methods must appear highly seasonable and proper to all, who believe the Being and Providence of God; and that he prospers or punishes states or communities in this world, as they are virtuous and religious, or otherwise: — when they recollect that one of God's judgments *war*, and that the worst sort, a *civil* and intestine war, was *but just now* at their doors; and that a *contagious* and mortal *disorder* has been long suffered to rage amongst the cattle, and has spread itself into almost all parts of the kingdom; and whether it shall stop with the brutes, or extend itself to *human* creatures, no one, but the great Governor of kingdoms, and sovereign disposer of *all* events can possibly tell.

Let us not then say in our hearts, for *our* uprightness, for the piety and virtue of our lives hath the LORD rescued us; but for the

* The weekly market *here* is held on *monday*; and the beasts of course are *chiefly*, and some think of *necessity*, brought in the day before, or *sunday*.

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wickedness of our *enemies*, and the extreme baseness of their schemes and enterprises. Let us not be puffed up, and think that we shall be allowed in, and are *delivered* to continue in our former wicked courses; but remember that the goodness of God is intended to lead us to *repentance*: and let us forthwith set ourselves to *amend* our ways or doings, and *return* to the Lord. It may be by so doing we shall prevent any other judgments ready to befall us; and shall procure a *lengthening out* or continuance of our tranquility, or prosperity.

To suffer the joy, which a due reflection upon our *great deliverance* must fill us with, to transport us into riot and excess, revelling and drunkenness, is to shew ourselves most unworthy the divine blessing and mercy, that has been afforded us; and most manifestly to insult the God that hath *delivered* us.

And one of the *most acceptable* ways of expressing our gratitude for *this great deliverance*, after having joined sincerely in the public offices, and taken measures for
C amending

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amending *our own* lives and tempers, seems to be, to make what provision we can to render the *generation to come* more civilized and humane, more diligent and frugal, more honest and sober, more modest and obsequious, more orderly, peaceable, and loyal; more learned, pious, and religious, than the *present*; * by giving a *suitable education* to children destitute of friends and wealth.

Human creatures are, for the most part, just what their *education* has made them. without this they are little more than *brutes*; of *less* strength indeed than bears or wolves, but of *more* subtlety and cunning, more de-

* *Saint Ives*, though exceeding populous, and of pretty extensive traffick, is altogether destitute of every thing in the shape of a *free* or *charity school*. It's navigable river, it's beast-markets, and brick-kilns, together with it's starch-houses heretofore, and a shameful neglect of education in almost *all* ranks, the more *numerous* and *lower* sort especially, have concurred to train up, and furnish out a generation of animals, that may vie with the *most savage* of human creatures; those that have conversed with barren mountains *only*, or been shut up in *lead*, or *coal-mines* from their infancy: and make all sober and thoughtful people

liberate and resolved malice. the same ravenous wild things, pursuing their *own* gratification without restraint, and at all events ; and throwing down, as they are able, all that stands in their way. 'Tis education that breaks them, and fits them for society. 'tis this that extends their views and pursuits ; makes them pay a proper regard to the welfare of their fellow subjects, and creatures ; and give up all schemes and pursuits, but such as are consistent with the good of *mankind*, and their *country*. 'tis this that makes them true to their *God*, their *religion*, their *country*, their *prince*,

people extremely sensible of the want of *public* and *free* instruction. Many attempts have been made by the author to get a foundation for instructing *destitute* children in the knowledge of *letters*, *virtue*, and *religion* ; and inuring them to such kind of *labour*, as may render them *easy* to *themselves*, and, instead of burthensome or mischievous, *useful* to *those about them*. What is here offered was intended to *second*, or set home a *motion* of that kind, made the *sunday* before ; which met with more regard, than things are wont to do, that don't bring an *immediate* reward along with them.

and

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and their *friend*. 'tis this that makes them study to please and obey their *parents*, and *governours* of all kinds ; and to oblige, and be respected by *all mankind*.

To do what we can therefore to give a suitable education to such, as are unable to procure it for themselves, must certainly be one of the *best* of *all* good works ; and in which part of that *wealth*, which together with our religion and liberties has by the goodness of God been preserved and secured to us, may be applied to the *very best* of *all* purposes. By being *rich*, bountiful or liberal in this good work, we shall most clearly manifest a *truly christian*, or *universally kind* and beneficent temper : demonstrating most undeniably that we seek not *our own*, but *another's* wealth ; that we study, and are *ready*, and *zealous* to promote not our own good or profit *only*, or *chiefly*, but that of *others*, of *many*, of *all mankind too*, to the utmost of our power ; by getting them educated in such a manner, that they
may

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may be *useful* in their generation *here*, and
may be finally *saved* in the day of the LORD
JESUS, by their behaviour, that is, intitled
and of course admitted to the happiness of
good *subjects*, good *neighbours*, good *men*,
and good *Christians* after death, through the
merits and mediation of *Christ* JESUS
our *almighty* SAVIOUR and DELIVERER.
Amen!

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may be useful in their generation and
may be finally proved in the day of the Lord
Jesus, by their behavior, that is, in the
end of course admitted to the kingdom of
God, which is good and true, good and
and good Christian, through the
merits and merits of Jesus Christ
our Saviour and Deliverer.







